

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY-PARISH COUNCIL MEETING OF THE CITY-PARISH OF LAFAYETTE, STATE OF LOUISIANA, TAKEN AT AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2005.

ATTENDANCE

COUNCIL: Randy Menard – Chair (District 9), Rob Stevenson – Vice Chair (District 8), Bobby Badeaux (District 1), Dale Bourgeois (District 2), Christopher J. Williams, Ph.D. (District 3), Lenwood Broussard (District 5), Marc Mouton (District 7)

ABSENT: Louis C. Benjamin, Jr. (District 4), Bruce Conque (District 6)

COUNCIL STAFF: Norma Dugas (Clerk of the Council), Veronica Williams (Assistant Clerk) and Anne Patin (Senior Administrative Assistant)

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF: L. J. Durel, Jr. (City-Parish President), Dee Stanley (CAO), Becky Lalumia (CFO), Pat Ottinger (Legal Counsel), Gail Smith (Administrative Services), Chief Randy Hundley (Police Department), Chief Robert Benoit (Fire Department), Tom Carroll (Public Works Department), Gerald Boudreaux (Parks & Recreation Department), Terry Huval (Utilities Department), Eleanor Bouy (Planning, Zoning & Codes Department), Melanie Lewis (Community Development Department), Tony Tramel (Traffic & Transportation Department), Keith Thibodeaux (CIO)

COMMENCEMENT

(TAPE 1)(SIDE A)(000) AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Call to order.

Chair Randy Menard called the Emergency Council Meeting of September 26, 2005 to order.

The Chair then announced that Councilmembers Conque and Benjamin would not be in attendance. They are out of town.

EMERGENCY ORDINANCE

(TAPE 1)(SIDE A)(006) AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: EMERGENCY O-270-2005 An emergency ordinance of the Lafayette City-Parish Council recognizing and certifying as to a public emergency as a result of Hurricane Rita and providing for the authority of the Lafayette City-Parish President to take certain actions in response to such public emergency, including the expenditure of funds pursuant to an emergency appropriation and the execution of agreements with other political subdivisions for the provision of assistance and other aid, motion to adopt as amended (*add to Section 2(c) after the first municipality “in the parishes of Calcasieu, Vermilion, Iberia, Acadia, Cameron and Jeff Davis” and add “such” before the second municipality to read “such other municipality”*) by Stevenson, seconded by Badeaux, and the vote was as follows:

YEAS: Badeaux, Bourgeois, Williams, Broussard, Mouton, Stevenson, Menard

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Benjamin, Conque

ABSTAIN: None

Motion was unanimously approved as amended.

Ottinger explained that this ordinance is similar to the ordinance adopted during the Hurricane Katrina disaster. The difference in the two ordinances is that the Hurricane Katrina ordinance dealt with Lafayette Parish as a support parish for other parishes directly affected by the hurricane and the Hurricane Rita ordinance dealt with Lafayette Parish as a direct, weather-impacted parish. O-270-2005 includes: 1) a deletion of a reference to “a waiver exemption of certain standards pertinent to PZC issues; 2) a feature has been added to subparagraph g “the President or his designee is authorized to give temporary access to contractors who are dealing with debris removal and/or utilities restoration” to give them access to LCG property and/or servitudes; 3) in Paragraph e, authorizes the President to make application for emergency grants and the Finance Department to make the appropriate recognition of income and recognition of expenditure; 4) in Paragraph f, authorizes the President to enter into contracts for necessary repairs or alterations to any equipment in accordance with the public bid law; and 5) in Paragraph c, gives the IT Department authority to support other municipalities in the disaster area; 6) this ordinance allocated an additional \$2,000,000, subject to reporting requirements; 7) Section 4 was added in anticipation of another hurricane so that emergency procedures and funds could be placed immediately. Total funding would remain at \$4,000,000.

Stanley reported that LCG has received \$8,300,000 from the State of Louisiana, which included the \$2,000,000 appropriation from O-263-2005. These funds were for housing of the evacuees from Hurricane Katrina for a period of 90 days. Lalumia added that a report would be made by the Finance Department on October 20, 2005 on the first \$2,000,000. Stanley suggested that anyone needing services should call City Hall for a list of resources or dial “211” on a phone.

Williams then requested that, in conjunction with the fiscal report on October 20th, the Council also receive a report on the zoning changes.

The Chair then recognized U. S. Congressman Charles Boustany, State Representative Don Trahan and Conrad Comeaux, Lafayette Parish Assessor.

Upon questioning by Badeaux, Ottinger explained that the emergency ordinance has a life of 30 days, with an option to extend for an additional 30 days. The companion ordinance would supplant the emergency ordinance; therefore, a sunset clause should be added.

A motion was offered by Mouton to amend Section c, page 4 of the ordinance by adding “the parishes of Calcasieu, Vermilion, Iberia, Acadia, Cameron and Jeff Davis”. The maker and second accepted.

INTRODUCTORY ORDINANCES

(TAPE 1)(SIDE A)(296) AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: O-271-2005 An ordinance of the Lafayette City-Parish Council recognizing and certifying as to a public emergency as a result of Hurricane Rita and providing for the authority of the Lafayette City-Parish President to take certain actions in response to such public emergency, including the expenditure of funds pursuant to an emergency appropriation and the execution of agreements with other political subdivisions for the provision of assistance and other aid, as amended (*add to Section 2(c) after the first municipality “in the parishes of Calcasieu, Vermilion, Iberia, Acadia, Cameron and Jeff Davis” and add “such” before the second municipality to read “such other municipality”*) by Mouton, seconded by Stevenson, and the vote was as follows:

YEAS: Badeaux, Bourgeois, Williams, Broussard, Mouton, Stevenson, Menard

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Benjamin, Conque

ABSTAIN: None

Motion was unanimously approved as amended.

Ottinger stated that he would prepare an amendment to this ordinance regarding the sunset clause at final adoption.

(TAPE 1)(SIDE A)(330) AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Comments from the public regarding the above introductory ordinance. *No comments were made.*

(TAPE 1)(SIDE A)(332) The Chair then recognized LCG Directors with hurricane reports, as well as the following State and F.E.M.A. Officials:

Congressman Charles Boustany commended the Council, President Durel and his staff and the community for the outstanding job done during both disasters. He stated he had been to the affected areas and seen the destruction. He was working with State and Federal officials to get relief to these areas. He commended those involved for the job being done by the area OEPs and officials. He then recognized Representative Don Trahan who was traveling with him to the affected areas. Upon questioning by Williams, Boustany stated that Congress has made a firm commitment to do what it has to do to get Louisiana back on its feet. Majority Leader Delay, who has seen Louisiana first-hand, recognized the magnitude of the disaster. Durel urged Boustany to do everything he could to declare Lafayette Parish a disaster area citing ruined crops and damage to property.

Terry Huval, LUS Director, reported that power outages were predicted for this storm. On the night before the storm, crews worked until the winds reached 45 to 50 miles per hour. By 6:00 the next morning there were an estimated 15,000 customers that were out of service. By 9:00 there was an additional 7,000 customers out. This was about 40% of the LUS customers. The water service (with backup generators), sewer system and fiber system was uninterrupted. As of this date, less than 100 customers do not have service but should by the end of the day. Backup crews came from many entities in the country and lodging was a task. Hotels were full so UL provided dorms, the Fire Department provided the Fire Training Center and Parks & Recreation provided several recreation centers. He then listed many other local agencies that provided assistance. Several councilmembers remarked that constituents were frustrated with the automated answering system at LUS.

Durel asked that Huval provide him with the name of the last subdivision to get electricity after the storm.

Tom Carroll, Director of Public Works, reported that, from a Public Works standpoint, it was not nearly as bad as expected. Preliminary calculations show about 250,000 cubic yards of debris that needed to be picked up. An RFP has already gone out for debris pickup and the solicitations should be turned in by noon on September 27th. Public Works crews have started picking up some debris and BFI has offered 2 grab-bucket trucks. So far, 130 trees have been cleared from the rights-of-way. The RFP allows for 3 passes by the contractor with 1 big pass and 2 supplemental passes. He added that anyone wanting to clear and haul their own debris, fees for the compost facility have been waived. Carroll then stated that he has been in contact with a resident who has a one thousand-horsepower tub grinder and it will be delivered to the compost facility by Wednesday. Presently, the compost facility has a three hundred-horsepower tub grinder. He continued by stating that BFI was closed on September 22 and 23 due to the closure of the landfill in Jeff Davis Parish. They will readjust their schedule in order to pick up all trash and ask that residents place their trash and debris near the curb, not in the street. In regard to other issues, Public Works had very little problems with drainage (anyone having drainage problems can call 291-8517) and the Public Works facilities experienced minor damages. F.E.M.A. and Homeland Security are setting up a location between the Cajundome and Blackham Coliseum and Public Works is providing recycled asphalt. Carroll then thanked Sheriff Neustrom and the inmate labor crews who helped.

Joe Kimball, F.E.M.A. representative, explained that Lafayette Parish was declared eligible for 100% Federal reimbursement for a 34-day period.

Thayne Coffin, Public Assistance Coordinator for the southwest parishes, announced that Robert Lynn is the “point of contact” in the Lafayette area. He then stated he would answer any questions. Williams asked, as it related to private property, if F.E.M.A would work on private property? Williams was told that Joe Kimball would provide him with an answer at a later date. Coffin stated that Robert Lynn could be reached at (703) 673-8516. He then introduced his state counterpart, Billy Crabb.

Ron Foss, Small Business Coordinator with the Small Business Disaster Assistance office, was then recognized. Foss began by stating that Hurricane Rita has not been declared, as yet, for individual assistance. A Disaster Recovery Center has been opened at 111 Liberty Avenue in Lafayette. Overall, 11,000 applications have been received for Hurricane Katrina. The bulk of those applications have been for homeowners and renters. He then gave the following phone number for F.E.M.A.: 800 + 659-2955 and urged anyone with damages to register with F.E.M.A. as soon as possible.

Upon questioning by the Council, the following information was given:

- Agricultural losses are handled by the Department of Agriculture.
- President Bush determined the declaration of individual assistance. Damages are being assessed and that information will be sent to the President.
- Individuals with flood insurance should contact their agent first. If they can’t locate their agent they should then contact their insurance company. They can contact F.E.M.A. at www.fema.gov/NFIP.

Stevenson requested that the Clerk compose a list with all of the phones numbers and e-mail addresses given tonight to provide to the Council for their use. Foss recommended that individuals be sent to DRC office at 111 Liberty Avenue for information. The DRC office has a mitigation expert, a SBA person, an IA person, housing personnel and personnel to help in filling out registration. He also urged the Council to discourage the granting of waivers and variances. This would put their constituency in a safer position in times of flood and hurricane winds. Chair Menard then requested that the Clerk contact AOC and request that they show this portion of this meeting several times so that individuals in need can obtain the contact numbers and e-mail addresses.

Foss added that the time limit for reporting a claim has been extended for Hurricane Katrina to one year instead of 60 days; expedited processes have been put in for the claims, and companies have been authorized to give advances of up to \$3,000 for individuals with flood claims and the claims will be adjusted.

Chair Menard then thanked all of the F.E.M.A. representatives for attending the meeting and answering questions.

Foss then announced that an informational meeting would be held tonight at the Clifton Chenier Center at 6:30 p.m.

Williams announced that Senator Landrieu is touring the southwestern part of the State and will be back in Lafayette to speak to city and state officials at 4:30 p.m. in the Courthouse.

Tony Tramel, Traffic & Transportation Director, reported that the staff has been surveying the City for downed signs and traffic lights. A press release went out this morning indicating the signal light at Camellia and Kaliste Saloom suffered a catastrophic hit and should be working again in a day or two. He asked the public to avoid this intersection as much as possible. 98.5% of all traffic signals are working, \$15,000 has been spent to shuttle evacuees from the Cajundome back and forth, and an estimated 1500 street name signs and stop signs are down. Preliminary totals are at \$440,000.

Chief Randy Hundley, Police Department, reported the Police responded to 4,050 calls during the last three days. All officers worked through the hurricane and most of them sent their families off to other communities.

Chief Robert Benoit, Fire Department, reported that 309 calls were received with over 2077 hours of overtime involved. The Fire Department worked in conjunction with Acadian Ambulance and the Police Department. Facilities suffered minimal damage and a fire truck did not work due to moisture.

Gerald Boudreaux, Parks & Recreation Director, sent in a written report.

Eleanor Bouy, Planning, Zoning & Codes Director, reported that a 1-day certificate of occupancy was put in place for displaced businesses. PZC is now allowing, for a 1-year period, the placement of temporary, commercial mobile homes and RVs and travel trailers to be used as a residences to house people as long as it is located at a home that is occupied. Bouy stated she was working with F.E.M.A., at this time, to establish some bona fide travel trailer and mobile home parks but will not lift any of the sanitary, safety or density codes. No tent cities will be allowed. Upon questioning by Williams, Bouy explained that a mobile home could only be placed on a lot with an existing house for a period of 1 year. Bouy assured Babeaux that it was not F.E.M.A.'s intent or President Durel's intent to violate the current, existing codes whatsoever.

Williams interjected that many of the 40,000 evacuees will decide to remain in Lafayette and a mechanism is needed to provide for permanent housing in the City over and beyond what the private sector can and will provide. He requested a report regarding LCG's plan to house these people, particularly as it relates to the 800 adjudicated properties in Lafayette. This would allow LCG to collect taxes still on the tax rolls, it would put 800 pieces of property to use, and it would offer a permanent solution of housing for evacuees. Stanley respectfully requested an extension on this report due to an emergency meeting of the EOC at 5:00 p.m. Williams agreed to postpone till a later date.

Philippe Gustin, International Trade, reported that his department was overwhelmed with response to the hurricanes. A “Katrina Relief Fund of Acadiana” has been set up to channel all of the funds. He added that Zachary Richard is setting up relief performances in Canada and the French Ambassador will be visiting next week to tell the Trade Center what France has provided or will continue to provide for Louisiana.

Keith Thibodeaux, IT Director, submitted a written report.

Conrad Comeaux, Tax Assessor, was recognized. Regarding adjudicated properties, Comeaux stated that the number of adjudicated properties is around 600 but before LCG starts doing something with those 600 properties, there is a myriad of legal questions that surround those properties because of how the tax process was handled in the past. He explained that he had been working the Health Care Taskforce. He pointed out several health issues that had occurred with the onset of the hurricanes. He continued that the hospitals continue to have high occupancies; the nursing homes are full and winter has not come yet. In light of that, the Task Force has put in for a special-needs facility and a mental health facility temporarily. The most pressing need is the LSU Medical School Residency Program that was displaced. If something is not done by October 1st, all 500 residents will go to other states and many will stay where they did their residency. He suggested that a closed hotel, within the city, be remediated to hold these residents. Williams requested a list of the individuals on the Health Care Taskforce and what their general mission is. Stanley offered to take questions for the Task Force from the Council so that they can be a conduit for that.

Gail Smith, Administrative Services Director, reported that LCG is in receipt of a grant that assists evacuees with jobs. It is a temporary job paying \$9.00 an hour for up to 12 weeks and there are still positions available. Anyone interested can call 291-7034.

Menard stated that General Honore, being media shy, was the first beacon of light that gave us hope and he needs to know that. Stanley agreed and stated Honore was on the air within minutes of arrival for that exact same reason. He commands quite a presence and that presence follows him.

ADJOURN

(TAPE 2)(SIDE B)(303) There being no further business to come before the Council, the Emergency Council Meeting was adjourned.

NORMA A. DUGAS, CLERK
LAFAYETTE CITY-PARISH COUNCIL